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THE MAGICIANS OF PHARAOH

THE FRAZER LECTURE, 1936

BY WARREN R. DAWSON, F.R.S.E., F.S.A.

Delivered at the University of Glasgow, on Tuesday,
4th February, 1936

"Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments."—*Exodus*, vii. 11.

MAGIC plays the leading part in Sir James Frazer's monumental *Golden Bough*, and in that work he has studied the origin, nature and application of the magic art throughout the ages and as it manifests itself in countless different countries of the world. Sir James has collected and marshalled a vast array of evidence relating to this curious and obtrusive branch of human activity with all his accustomed learning, thoroughness and skill. But it is striking to observe to how relatively small an extent the magic of ancient Egypt is called upon in this great symposium, although in no civilization in the world has magic played so obtrusive a part from the earliest antiquity as it did in the valley of the Nile. The apparent neglect of so important a body of evidence proves upon examination to be no neglect at all, but merely another instance (if any were needed) of the caution displayed by Sir James in his invariable practice of quoting only from reliable authorities. At the time when the *Golden Bough* was in preparation, there was, indeed, no reliable source of information on Egyptian magic available to Sir James. In spite of many books, articles, and other references to magic scattered through the vast literature of Egyptology, there had been, at that time, no serious attempt at a special study and real

understanding of the subject, and this fact is alone sufficient, and amply sufficient, to justify Sir James in not having made fuller use of the Egyptian evidence.

It can, indeed, be confidently stated that the nature and practice of the Magic Art in Egypt was little understood, or was rather completely misunderstood, until Dr. Alan Gardiner, with his usual acumen and skill, set out a masterly analysis of the subject in one of his valuable contributions to the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.¹ This outline—for the nature of the publication in which it appeared admitted of no more than an outline,—is the solid and enduring foundation upon which the fuller study of Egyptian magic must necessarily be based, and I freely and willingly acknowledge my indebtedness to it in my own studies of the magical texts.

I propose to lay before you a sketch of the practice of the art of the magicians of Pharaonic times, illustrated by examples drawn directly from the magical texts themselves. The time at my disposal will necessarily limit me to little more than a bare exposé of the subject, and I must leave to others the task of seeking and establishing parallels between the rites, customs and beliefs here outlined, with those of other peoples and of other ages, of which the *Golden Bough* provides so rich a store. Nor shall I discuss the Egyptian origin, palpable in many cases, of some of the rites and tricks of the magician which reappear in so striking a manner in later ages and in other parts of the world,² but without more ado, I will attempt to lay before you a sketch of what my own studies of the texts have taught me as to the magic art in Egypt.

In ancient Egypt, magic entered very largely into the whole of the religious and social system: it affected not only the relations of men with their living fellows, but with

¹ Vol. viii (1915), pp. 262–269.

² In this connexion, see my *Leechbook*, London 1934, pp. xii–xvi.

the dead and with the gods. By the Egyptian, magic was believed to be a sure means of accomplishing all his necessities and desires and to perform, in short, everything which the common procedure of everyday life was inadequate to bring about. It was, theoretically at least, the private faith of the magician in his own omnipotence, his *credo quia impossibile*. One thing, however, seems quite certain at least so far as Egypt is concerned, and that is, that the complex religious and social system of that country, as well as the "wisdom" for which Egypt was always renowned among her neighbours, had their basic origin in magical ceremonies, and by magic they were very largely sustained.

The Egyptians, naturally a gifted and practical people, were not abstract thinkers, yet in very early times they so far recognized the existence and importance of the mystical power upon which they placed so much reliance, as to conceive it as an entity and to name it. In very early texts we meet with the word *hike*, 'magic,' a mystic power that was soon personified as a god, and it was by virtue of this *hike* that they carried on throughout their long history the complex series of rites, customs and beliefs which we to-day describe as magical. As has already been hinted, the power of magic was coextensive with the whole range of human activity and desire, and it was employed explicitly or implicitly for almost every conceivable purpose.

First, as regards the dead. The attitude of the Egyptians towards death and the dead has been ably defined by my predecessor,³ and it is accordingly needless for me to say more than a few words on this aspect of the question. The great funerary compositions which cover the walls of the royal pyramids of some of the kings of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties (now generally known as the *Pyramid Texts*), the long compositions inscribed on the wooden coffins of the

³ *The Attitude of the Ancient Egyptians to Death and the Dead: the Frazer Lecture for 1935.* Cambridge, 1935.

Middle Kingdom (*Coffin Texts*), and those written upon rolls of papyrus which were in vogue from the Eighteenth Dynasty to the time of the Ptolemies (*The Book of the Dead*),—all these and other cognate texts, generally spoken of as religious texts, are in reality nothing but magical spells designed to protect the dead man against danger and to promote his welfare and happiness in his continued existence after death, whether in the tomb or in the mysterious continuation of his earthly life, conceived either as a sky-world or as an underworld. The last Frazer Lecturer has shown how magic pervades the relations of the living to the dead, and I will accordingly leave the subject and confine attention to magic in its relation to the living.

It will be convenient first to glance at the magician in his more or less spectacular function of wonder-worker. The popular literature of Egypt has preserved for us some examples of the magician in this capacity. A well-known papyrus at Berlin is our principal source of information : it contains a series of popular tales of the wonders worked by magicians for the entertainment and amusement of the Pharaohs of the Pyramid Age. In these narratives we are told of a magician who fashioned a miniature crocodile of wax over which he recited spells which transformed it into a real crocodile of full size which seized a guilty man as he was bathing in a lake.⁴ In another episode, the magician parted the waters of a lake in order to recover a jewel which had been dropped into the water by one of the rowers of a boat.⁵ King Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid, was entertained by the prodigies performed by a magician named Djedji, who was a most remarkable person. The text says of him : “ There is a man of humble birth and Djedji is his name. He is but a poor man of one hundred and ten years old, yet he can eat five loaves of bread and a haunch of beef, and can drink a hundred jugs of beer at this

⁴ *Pap. Westcar*, 3, 4-13.

⁵ *Pap. Westcar*, 5, 16-6, 12.

very day." This hearty centenarian was brought before the king who said: "Is it true, as it is rumoured, that thou canst put on a head that has been cut off?" Djedji answered in the affirmative, and the king ordered a captive to be brought in and beheaded in order that the magician might give proof of his powers. The old man, however, refused to experiment on a human subject, and asked for a goose instead. The bird was accordingly brought and its head chopped off, "and the goose was put on the left side of the chamber, and its head on the right side of the chamber. And Djedji recited his magic spells, at which the goose arose and moved, and its head also. Now when one had reached the other, the goose stood up and cackled." Similar experiments were performed with a duck and an ox.⁶ In a papyrus of much later date, it is related that a magician by means of a charm brought an official from Ethiopia to the palace of the Pharaoh in the Delta, where, on his arrival he was chastised with five hundred blows of a stick and sent back again, all within six hours.⁷ The Egyptian magicians in the court of Pharaoh confronted Moses and Aaron with prodigies quite as marvellous.⁸

So much for the stories of magicians as mere wonder-workers. The magic art, however, was far more often exercised in defensive, protective, preventive, productive and prognostic purposes. In passing on to survey these, we must first make some observations on the magician's methods of procedure, as they were applied to their several purposes. The magician often operated merely by word of mouth only, but in most spells the spoken words are accompanied by a ritual, by gestures or by the use of amulets or other objects. These two phases of the magician's art have been aptly defined by Dr. Alan Gar-

⁶ *Pap. Westcar*, 8, 18-26.

⁷ *Second Story of Khamuas*, 5, 22-24 (Demotic text on the verso of B. M. Greek Papyrus, 604).

⁸ *Exodus*, 7, 18-12.

diner as the *oral rite* and the *manual rite* respectively, the forms of which will appear as we proceed.⁹ It is usual in the magical texts to find a rubric at the end of the oral rite giving directions as to the accompanying manual rite.

The services of the magician are most commonly met with in the prevention or cure of sickness, injury, the bites or stings of noxious animals and other similar calamities befalling the individual. These medical applications of the magic art, besides being the most numerous, well exemplify the procedure of the practitioner, and it will be convenient to deal with these somewhat fully before considering some of the more miscellaneous purposes which called the services of the magician into requisition.

In the numerous medico-magical texts which have come down to us, the idea of possession is very evident, for diseases are usually treated as if personified and they are addressed and harangued by the magician. It is generally implied that disease or suffering is due to the actual presence in the patient's body of the demon itself, but just as often it is implied that the suffering is due to some poison or other evil emanation that the demon has injected into the patient's body.

In such cases, the simplest method of treatment was the recitation of a spell in which the demon was simply commanded to quit, or the poison to flow forth and leave the patient's body. Such spells are usually full of references to the gods and contain fragments of myths which are themselves of the highest interest. The defeat of the demon is thus attributed to the power of the gods mentioned in the spell, or rather to the magic power inherent in their names. It was important also that the patient's name should be uttered in the spell itself, so that the possessing spirit might clearly understand that its presence in the body of such and such a specific person was being referred to by the magician.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 264, § 7.

Accordingly in the written spells a place is always indicated in the text at which the patient's name should be pronounced. The formula in Egyptian is *mn ms' n mn.t*, "so and so, born of so and so (fem.)," or as the French equivalent better expresses it, "un tel, né d'une telle."¹⁰ In the examples quoted below, this formula will be rendered "N. born of M."

The possessing spirit is usually conceived as a god or a goddess, a dead man or a dead woman, an enemy male or female, or a pain, male or female. This collocation of words is an oft-recurring formula in the magical spells.

The simplest spells begin by warning the demon off, and continue by informing it of its powerlessness to exert any evil influence while under the magician's ban. A few examples may be given :

"Back ! Fall upon thy face ! Thou shalt not exist in heaven ; thou shalt not exist on earth ; thou art not in the nether-world ; thou art not in the waters. . . . Thou comest not to fetch N. born of M. ; thou fallest not upon him ; thou shalt not work thy will upon him. Beware of consuming N. born of M."¹¹

"Back ! thou enemy, thou dead man or dead woman, etc., who dost cause suffering to N. born of M. . . . Thou dost not fall upon him ; thou dost not establish thyself in him ; thy head has no power over his head ; thy arms have no power over his arms. . . . Thou fallest not upon him, no pain shall come upon him." . . .¹²

"Thou fliest before the sorcerer, before the servant of Horus, as soon as he mentions the name of Horus and the name of Seth. . . . So dost thou die."¹³

¹⁰ A poetical variant of the phrase sometimes occurs when the words "land born of sky" are used, e.g. *Pap. Ch. Beatty VIII*, verso 4, 6.

¹¹ *Pap. Chester Beatty*, VI, verso, 2, 2-5.

¹² *Toronto Ostracon C. I.*, 1-3.

¹³ *Pap. Leiden*, 345, G. iii, 11-G. iv, 1.

As an example of a longer spell, the following, translated by Dr. Alan Gardiner, may be quoted. It is typical of many of its class, and contains at the end the rubric giving directions for the manual rite.

“ Flow out, thou poison, come forth upon the ground. Horus conjures thee, he cuts thee off, he spits thee out, and thou risest not up but fallest down. Thou art weak and not strong, a coward and dost not fight, blind and dost not see. Thou liftest not thy face. Thou art turned back and findest not the way. Thou mournest and dost not rejoice. Thou creepest away and dost not appear. So speaketh Horus, efficacious of magic ! The poison which was rejoicing, the hearts of multitudes grieve for it ; Horus hath slain it by his magic. He who mourned is in joy. Stand up, thou who wast prostrate, Horus hath restored thee to life. He who came as one carried is gone forth of himself ; Horus hath overcome his bites. All men, when they behold Rē, praise the son of Osiris. Turn back thou snake, conjured is thy poison which was in any limb of N. the son of M. Behold, the magic of Horus is powerful against thee. Flow out thou poison, come forth upon the ground.

“ To be recited over a hawk with the two feathers on its head, being made of *isy*-wood and painted. Open its mouth and offer to it bread and beer and incense. Place it on the face of one who is suffering from the bite of any snake, and recite it from beginning to end. It will repel the poison. A successful specific.”¹⁴

In this instance, the manual rite consists of preparing a wooden image. More often a less elaborate object is employed, such as a clay amulet, a knotted string or a piece of inscribed linen. “ Say the words four times over a cord in which seven knots have been tied, and hang it about the patient’s neck.” Such is a very frequent formula and it occurs with endless variations. In a spell to assuage the

¹⁴ *Pap. Turin*, 131, 1-8 ; Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

pains of labour the rubric directs: "Say the words four times over a dwarf of clay, laid upon the top of the head of the woman who is giving birth."¹⁵ The rubric appended to a spell for headache in which various gods are mentioned directs: "To be recited over these gods drawn on fine linen and placed on the temple of the man."¹⁶ Demons fear amulets, and for this reason, knotted cords, clay figures, pictures of gods and other objects were often placed upon the affected part. Sometimes, however, instead of being thus locally applied, these charms were merely hung round the neck, or, again, to increase the mystic element, they might be attached to some part of the body far removed from the seat of the trouble. Thus an amulet used in connection with spells for the cure of headache is to be tied to the patient's left foot,¹⁷ or to his big toe,¹⁸ and in a prescription of drugs for an affection of the eye, directions are given to apply the preparation to the patient's ear.¹⁹

Innumerable instances might be quoted from the magical papyri of the various kinds of amulets used by the magician as part of his manual rite. In cases of illness, the manual rite often takes the form of giving the patient mixtures of various substances to eat and drink. The dose so given was rendered efficacious by reciting over it a spell or incantation. The so-called medical papyri, which are filled for the most part with prescriptions of drugs, are interspersed with magical spells the intention of which was to give efficacy to the prescriptions which follow them. The Ebers Papyrus, for instance, begins with a long incantation drawn up for this purpose. Such spells are the oral rites belonging to each group of prescriptions, the preparation and administration

¹⁵ *Pap. Leiden* 348, 12, 6. In Egypt, women were delivered in a kneeling position, hence the necessity to place the amulet on the top of the head.

¹⁶ *Pap. Ch. Beatty* V, 6, 4.

¹⁷ *Pap. Leiden* 348, verso 4, 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3, 1.

¹⁹ *Pap. Ebers*, 57, 19.

of which constitute the corresponding manual rite. Many of the doses in the medical papyri contain noxious or offensive ingredients, and the object of these is manifestly to be as unpalatable as possible to the possessing spirit, so as to give it no encouragement to linger in the patient's body. But even wholesome drugs might be offensive to spirits. Thus in one of the spells it is said to the demon :

“ I make a charm for him against thee with the Melilot (sweet-clover) which injures ; with onions which destroy thee ; and with honey which is sweet to the living and bitter to the dead.” ²⁰

In this case it is evidently possession by a dead man that has made the patient ill.

It is characteristic of the magician at all times that he should have more than one string to his bow, for if one remedy fails, another may succeed, and his reputation must at all costs be maintained. Consequently in the medical papyri are found numerous alternative prescriptions for each ailment and in the magical texts many alternative spells are provided for every kind of sickness and calamity. Some of these remedies contain drugs that are really beneficial and appropriate, and such prescriptions, actually accomplishing their purpose, would tend to survive their more fantastic fellows. By such means, more and more reliance came to be placed upon the drugs themselves, and less upon the magician's spells, and the persons therefore who would be most in request in cases of sickness would be those who were skilled in the knowledge and preparation of drugs. Such men were no longer magicians, but physicians, and thus out of magic grew medicine.

It must not be supposed that the coming of the physician extinguished magic. It is rare in human experience for the new completely to supersede the old. This fact, indeed, could be abundantly illustrated from the events of our life

²⁰ *Pap. Berlin* 3027, 2, 4.

to-day. We still perpetuate countless ceremonies and customs that have entirely lost their significance: in the coronation ritual, in numerous civic functions in which swords and maces are prominent, at the launching of ships, the laying of foundation-stones, at births, deaths and marriages and on scores of other occasions. The old forms, stripped of their significance, continue in their places beside the new, but perhaps they were originally retained as a reserve for emergencies; and just as the first steamships were provided with auxiliary sails, so the first physicians kept magic as a stand-by to be used in case of need. Medicine branched off from magic and began its independent career early in Egyptian history, for already in the Pyramid Age there are records of men bearing the title of physician as distinct from magician. But even the physicians were closely associated with magic and religion, and magical and religious elements (if they are indeed distinguishable) continued to pervade medicine. Both medicine and magic were "mysteries" and a knowledge of them implied special powers on the part of their exponents. There is, in the necropolis of Sakkara, the tomb of an eminent man in his day, who flourished in the Pyramid Age. Amongst his titles, which include "Priest of Selkis" (a goddess particularly associated with magic) there is also "Royal Physician, interpreter of a difficult science."²¹

The magico-religious element in Egyptian medicine is evident from the fact that every part of the body was associated with a god or a goddess. There are extant many lists of organs of the body, both internal and external, with the names of the divinities to whose protection they were respectively ascribed. These lists are found in documents of all periods from the Pyramid Age to the time of the Ptolemies. On the walls of the Pyramids of Sakkara,²² on

²¹ T. E. Peet, *Proc. Soc. Biblical Archaeology*, vol. 37 (1915), p. 224.

²² *Pyramid Texts*, §§ 135; 148-9; 1303-1315.

the wooden coffins of the Middle Kingdom,²³ on the walls of the royal tombs at Thebes,²⁴ in the Book of the Dead and kindred funerary compositions,²⁵ in the magical papyri of the New Kingdom,²⁶ in the great Metternich Stela of the Thirtieth Dynasty,²⁷ and elsewhere,²⁸ such lists of organs are tabulated with the names of their tutelary deities. In one document, the Berlin papyrus that contains spells for the protection of new-born infants, there are two such lists, one containing thirty-six and the other twenty-three different organs or parts of the body,²⁹ and in another, there is a list of twenty-nine body-parts arranged in the form of a litany, where the demon is warned off each part of the body in turn, the name and attributes of the god in charge of each such part being named, thus :

Thou shalt not take thy stand in his forehead ;
X. is against thee, lady of the forehead.
Thou shalt not take thy stand in his eyes ;
Y. is against thee, lord of the eyes.
Thou shalt not take thy stand in his ear ;
Z. is against thee, lord of the ear,

and so on, enumerating each part of the body, down to the toes.³⁰ With this custom of placing the parts of the body under divine protection, may be compared that of later times, in which each region of the body was placed under

²³ *Coffin of Amamu*, xxiv, 11-18 ; P. Lacau, *Textes Religieux*, xxvii.

²⁴ E. Naville, *Litanie du Soleil*, pls. 14, 20, 21, 32.

²⁵ *Book of the Dead*, § 42 ; 172 ; *Book of Breathings* ; L. D. vi, 122 (3, 13-4, 1), etc.

²⁶ *Pap. Berlin* 3027, 3, 6-5, 2 ; verso, 4, 8-5, 5 ; *Pap. Turin*, 125, 5-11 ; *Pap. Leiden* 348, verso, 5, 1-6, 2 ; *Pap. Ch. Beatty* VII, verso 2, 5-5, 6 ; *Pap. Ch. Beatty* VIII, 7, 1-9, 6 ; *Pap. Vatican* 36.

²⁷ *Metternichstele*, ii, 15-32.

²⁸ *Rev. de l'Egypte Anc.*, i, pp. 134-6 ; Dümichen, *Geographische Inschr.*, i, 82 ; iii, 1 ; iii, 43-50 ; *Tanis Sign Papyrus*, 7, 11-10, 6.

²⁹ *Pap. Berlin* 3027, 3, 6-5, 2 ; verso, 4, 8-5, 5.

³⁰ *Pap. Ch. Beatty* VII, verso, 2, 5-5, 6.

the influence of one of the signs of the Zodiac, and later still, when Christianity replaced paganism, the organs of the body were allotted to a standardized list of saints.³¹ In Pharaonic times, these lists of body-parts usually end with the phrase, "there is no part of the body without its god."³²

The religious element again appears in a series of prescriptions in the Ebers and Hearst Papyri, each of which is claimed to have been invented by a god. Thus there is, "a remedy which Rē made on his own behalf," "a second remedy which Shu made on his own behalf," "a third remedy which Tefnut made on behalf of Rē," and so on.³³

Apart from diseases that were treated as personified by the magicians, magic itself was sometimes believed to be dangerous and harmful and a cause of suffering. There is a collection of prescriptions headed "to banish magic from the body,"³⁴ similarly in another spell we read, "O N. born of M., I have rescued and protected thee from all things bad and evil, and from all evil magic which they have said against thee,"³⁵ this last being paralleled by the mediæval belief in "ill-wishing." But ailments generally, as already noted, were laid to the charge of a god or a goddess, a dead man or a dead woman, to which list is sometimes added, "a male pain or a female pain,"³⁶ "a male epilepsy or a female epilepsy,"³⁷ or "male magicians or female magicians whose hearts are ill-disposed towards N. born of M."³⁸ Spirits of a foreign origin were especially formidable, and there are formulae for repelling the influence of a negress,

³¹ See my paper in *Aegyptus*, xi (1931), pp. 26-27.

³² *Pap. Berlin* 3027, verso, 5, 6; *Pap. Leiden* 348, verso, 6, 2; *Book of Breathings*, etc.

³³ *Pap. Ebers*, 46, 16-47, 10; *Pap. Hearst*, 5, 7-15.

³⁴ *Pap. Ebers*, 34, 2-35, 12. ³⁵ *Pap. Ch. Beatty* VIII, 7, 6.

³⁶ *Pap. Ebers*, 30, 13-14; 46, 15; 60, 21.

³⁷ *Pap. Ch. Beatty* VI, verso 2, 2; *Ch. B. VIII*, verso 8, 5.

³⁸ *Pap. Ch. Beatty* IX, verso B. 12, 5-6; similarly *Ch. Beatty* VIII, 9, 7.

or of "an Asiatic woman who steals in secretly in the dark,"³⁹ or of "foreigners of a southern, northern, western or eastern country, males or females."⁴⁰ The possessing spirit either resided in the patient's body, or else injected into it some poison or other evil influence. Once installed, the demon or its influence made the patient ill, and its speedy rejection was necessary. This was accomplished by the simple recitation of spells, to which reference has already been made, by the use of amulets, or by the administration of a dose, or by these methods combined. The ejected demon, or the poison, left the patient's body in various ways: either it came out through the excretions of the body,⁴¹ the fæces, urine or sweat, or it passed out as flatus,⁴² or left the body invisibly by the natural openings of the head. Sometimes, however, such natural channels of exit were not used, but the magician called upon the affected parts of the body to "open their mouths" and disgorge what was within them,⁴³ which seems to imply a belief that the magician could make a fortuitous opening in any part of the body for the purpose of ridding it of its mischievous contents—a belief that is found in other parts of the world. In the medical and magical papyri each spell or prescription is headed by a title (always written in red ink), and instead of the simple phrase, "remedy for curing" such and such a disease, we find the words, "remedy for banishing," "driving out," "terrifying" or "killing" the disease. In such phraseology the idea of possession is very manifest. Some of the prescriptions, however, are said to be for "treating" a disease: this label must be regarded as later in origin than the commoner form, and was introduced at a period when the manual rite was superseding in

³⁹ *Pap. Berlin* 3027, 2, 7. ⁴⁰ *Pap. Ch. Beatty* IX, verso, B. 12, 4.

⁴¹ *Pap. Berlin* 3027, 2, 8-10. Here the influence is bidden to come out through the secretions of the nose or the sweat of the body.

⁴² *Pap. Leiden* 348, verso, 12, 9. ⁴³ *Pap. Leiden* 345, verso, G. ii, 14.

importance the oral rite, that is to say when rational therapeutics began to take the place of pure magic. The notion of possession is never entirely absent, however, and even when treating a disease by rational therapeutic methods, the physician could never forget that his craft originated in various attempts to coax, charm, threaten or forcibly expel the disease-causing demon from its involuntary host. Indeed, many of the drugs in the medical papyri, even when wholesome and rational, originally found their way into the pharmacopœia for purely magical reasons. It is true that we are ignorant of the origin of most of the drugs used, but it is known that in many cases substances were employed simply because their names made puns upon certain words in the recited incantations. Throughout Egyptian literature, both secular and religious, the Egyptians lost no opportunity of paronomasia, or making plays on words, a habit that frequently led to the introduction of periphrases simply to "drag in" puns. Innumerable examples of this inveterate habit might be quoted, but it will suffice to mention but a few. In the poetical hymns to Amūn in a Leiden papyrus, puns are made on the numerals of the chapters⁴⁴; a poem on the king's panoply of war introduces a pun on the name of every weapon or part of the chariot that is mentioned in it⁴⁵; in the recently discovered dream-book, puns are made in almost every clause on the words defining the nature of the dream by those of its interpretation⁴⁶; the 83rd spell of the Book of the Dead opens with a series of puns; and many, many more instances could be cited. As has already been observed, many alternative spells or prescriptions are given for each illness or complaint and these contain elements whose actions, if any, are often widely different from each other. The very multi-

⁴⁴ *Pap. Leiden* 350.

⁴⁵ *Edinburgh Ostracon* 916 = *Journ. Eg. Arch.*, xix, 167.

⁴⁶ *Pap. Ch. Beatty* III.

licity of the magician's wares is of itself a confession of their purely arbitrary and unscientific character. Now it sometimes happened that one or more drugs contained in the various prescriptions really did accomplish the end for which they were employed, and consequently such remedies of known efficacy would tend to supersede the purely arbitrary and useless elements. Herein lies the real beginning of pharmacy, but before it would be known that such and such a herb really had such and such a property, many generations of sufferers must have had to submit to the arbitrary and often nauseating doses that contained nothing beneficial and must at times have been positively harmful. Such a course of semi-effectual experimenting was the necessary forerunner of any attempt to classify drugs and to record the purposes for which each was best suited. In such an attempted classification the Herbal had its birth.⁴⁷

It has already been stated, and must be reaffirmed, that the gradual infiltration of rationalism into the treatment of disease and sickness did not by any means give a death-blow to magic. Magical methods continued to be employed side by side with more rational procedure as the medical and magical papyri of Pharaonic times plainly show. Moreover, the existence of numerous magical papyri, dating from Ptolemaic times and later, written in demotic Egyptian, Coptic and Greek, show that magical practices for the cure of disease were in active operation long after the influence of scientific medicine, which was mainly due to the Greeks, had made itself felt. Magic maintained full sway throughout the early centuries of the Christian era, throughout the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages : it persisted into the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and is by no means extinct to-day, even amongst civilized nations. The magician, when he had become physician, was loth to

⁴⁷ This subject has been more fully developed in my paper on the origin of the Herbal, *Aegyptus*, x (1929), 47-72.

part with the mysticism of his craft, and he often disguised his more rational treatment under a veneer of mystery. There was always a preference for rare and bizarre elements in the prescriptions of drugs. The combination of magical and rational methods is well shown in the large group of prescriptions for treating stiff joints and articular complaints of a rheumatoid or arthritic nature. These mostly consist of ointments and emollients, the basis of which is a grease made of animal fat. So far, this is quite appropriate and rational. The magical element appears when, instead of merely ox-fat or goose-grease, the prescriptions introduce the fats of all kinds of different animals, many of them rare and difficult to obtain, such as the lion, oryx, ass, hippopotamus, snake, lizard, centipede, mouse, etc.⁴⁸ The combination of all these fats of different animals was clearly dictated by a belief in their respective magical virtues, and is not controlled merely by the rationalistic use of grease as an ointment. The magicians, moreover, may have had an interested motive in ascribing virtues to substances difficult for the patient to obtain. No ordinary patient could on the spur of the moment possess himself of the fats of all these animals, so as to compound a half dozen or more of them, but may be he could purchase from his healer a series of bladders or gallipots each respectively labelled as the fat of such and such an animal, whilst the pots actually contained, probably each and all of them, nothing but the homely goose-grease with perhaps a little colouring matter added, and bearing an appropriate ticket.

But whatever the method he employed, or whatever the purpose of his performance, the magician's principal asset was his prestige. He had to keep up appearances. He assumed a high and mighty rôle, and he arrogated to himself a superiority over the forces of nature and even over the gods themselves. Many of the magician's spells express

⁴⁸ *Ramesseum Med. Pap.*, No. 2, § 17. Cf. my *Leechbook*, § 650.

his assumed power over the elements, and again and again he threatens to suspend the forces of nature if his commands are not obeyed by the demon he is exorcising. In a spell against scorpion-stings, the magician threatens to stay the flow of the Nile, the light of the sun and the growth of seeds if the scorpion-goddess dares to sting his client.⁴⁹ In a spell against fever the magician says : " If he [the demon], hear not my words, I will not allow the sun to rise, I will not allow the Nile to flow, I will not allow to be performed services for the great gods who are in Memphis," etc.⁵⁰ Sometimes the magician makes direct and daring threats to the gods themselves. In a remarkable spell which is headed " a Book for Banishing an enemy," and which is directed against " every dead man, every dead woman, every male enemy, every female enemy, every male adversary, every female adversary, every male spirit, every female spirit," etc., the magician makes the most audacious threats, and repeats them again and again. " Should Osiris not know his [sc. Magic's] name, I will not allow him to fare down to Busiris, I will not allow him to sail up to Abydos, I will tear out his soul and annihilate his corpse, and I will set fire to every tomb of his." ⁵¹ In the Pyramid Texts also, dire threats are uttered against the gods by the king who addresses them, but fearing that he has become too bold, he disclaims responsibility for his utterances and lays the onus for his words upon divine shoulders. " It is not this Pepy [the King] who says this against you, ye gods ! It is *Hike*' [the God of Magic] who says this against you, ye gods ! " ⁵² Similarly in the magical texts the gods are thus made the scape-goats of the magician when his menaces have overstepped the bounds of prudence. " It

⁴⁹ *Pap. Turin*, 137, 1-4. ⁵⁰ *Pap. Ch. Beatty VII*, verso, 7, 3-5.

⁵¹ *Pap. Ch. Beatty VIII*, verso, 4, 7-8 and often, with variations of phrase. Similarly *Pap. Turin*, 135, 10; *Pap. Ebers*, 30, 8.

⁵² *Pyramid Texts*, § 1324.

is not I who say it, it is not I who repeat it ; it is Isis who says it, it is Isis who repeats it" :⁵³ this disclaimer is of frequent occurrence, with the names of various deities introduced,⁵⁴ and in another form it appears in the following words : " It is not I who say it, it is not I who repeat it, this magic which comes to fetch N. born of M. who says it and repeats it." ⁵⁵ Doubtless also the magician, by impersonating the gods, and speaking in the name of Horus, or other divinities, felt himself temporarily endowed with a god's privileges and thereby indemnified for his utterances even when no definite disclaimer is pronounced.

Sufficient has now been said to illustrate the magician's art in sickness and disease, and it is now necessary to survey some other applications of it. The magical papyri contain many examples of protective and defensive magic, directed against hostile powers generally. The following is a specimen of a spell to protect a new born baby :

" Greeting to you ! Isis hath twined and Nephthys hath tied the knot in the divine cord of seven knots with which I protect thee, O hale child, N. born of M. that thou mayest be healthy ; that thou mayest thrive ; that thou mayest satisfy every god and every goddess ; that every male enemy who shall traverse thy path may be overthrown ; that every female enemy who shall traverse thy path may be overthrown ; that every mouth that maligns thee may be stopped-up,⁵⁶ as the mouths are stopped-up and as the mouths are sealed of the seven-hundred-and-seventy asses that are in the Lake of Desdes.⁵⁷ I know them : I know their names, but he that knows them not and would plan evil against this child, would suffer repulse " and so forth.

" This spell is to be recited over seven beads of porphyry,

⁵³ *Pap. Leiden* 348, 11, 7.

⁵⁴ *Pap. Mag. Harris*, 9, 10-11 ; *Pap. Turin*, 136, 8-9.

⁵⁵ *Pap. Ch. Beatty VIII*, verso, 4, 5-6, and often.

⁵⁶ Lit. " walled-up."

⁵⁷ A mythological allusion.

seven beads of gold, seven threads of flax threaded by the two sister-mothers,⁵⁸ one of whom threads and the other ties them. To be completed by seven knots therein, and put upon the neck of this child.”⁵⁹

This spell introduces a feature of constant recurrence in the magical texts—the mystic number *seven*. It occurs times without number in the magical texts, and I have elsewhere collected hundreds of instances of its use,⁶⁰ to which many more might now be added from the recently published Chester-Beatty Papyri. This spell also, like many others, emphasizes the importance of knowing the magical names of hostile powers.

A papyrus in the British Museum contains spells for protection against the dangers of the water, such as crocodiles and death by drowning,⁶¹ as well as against dangerous animals of the land, such as “lions, panthers, wolves and all long-tailed animals that eat flesh and drink blood,”⁶² and persons who would “ill-wish” their victim into paralysis or helplessness.⁶³ Against the dangers of snakes and scorpions there are many spells, both of a prophylactic and curative kind.⁶⁴ Mention may also be made of a book of protection, where, after the introductory spells, the person for whom it is recited is placed under the purification and protection of numerous gods in a long series of repeated formulae :

“ Rē at his shining-forth purifies thee,
The Lords of Hermopolis Magna protect thee.
Atum himself purifies thee,
The Lords of Memphis protect thee.

⁵⁸ Isis and Nephthys.

⁵⁹ *Pap. Berlin* 3027, verso, 6, 1-7.

⁶⁰ “The number *Seven* in Egyptian Texts,” *Aegyptus*, viii (1927), pp. 97-107.

⁶¹ *Pap. Mag. Harris* (B. M. 10042); recto, 9 columns.

⁶² *Ibid.*, verso, B. 4-6.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, verso, B. 7-9.

⁶⁴ *Pap. Ch. Beatty VII*, I, 1-verso 1, 4; *Pap. Leiden* 349, *passim*; *Pap. Turin*, 134 and often; etc.

Rē in his horizon purifies thee,
 The Lords of Herakleopolis Magna protect thee.
 Amūn in Thebes purifies thee
 The Lords of Hermopolis Magna protect thee.
 Neith in Sais purifies thee,
 The Lords of Pe and Dep (Buto) protect thee.
 Nekhbet purifies thee,
 Satis and Anukis protect thee." . . .

and so on at length, through forty couplets.⁶⁵ The list ends with another long spell calling upon all the gods and goddesses whose names have been enumerated to unite and "purify N. born of M. ; drive ye away all evil from him, even as Rē is purified every day," etc. The whole ends with a rubric directing that the spell is to be recited over various precious stones, washed with milk, wherewith the man who seeks protection is to purify himself, accompanied with fumigation.⁶⁶ A most interesting but very obscure collection of spells with elaborate magical drawings is contained in one of the British Museum papyri.⁶⁷ The spells, besides containing the usual magical jargon, embody some very interesting references to the mythological origin of certain plants and other products of nature. It is said, for instance, that frankincense grew from the tears of Horus, the cedar tree from blood falling from the nose of Geb, incense trees from the tears of Shu and Tefnut, bees from the tears of Rē and water and marsh-plants from his sweat, and from the blood of Seth another tree sprang up.⁶⁸ The growth of plants and trees from shed blood is a feature well-known in folklore, and other Egyptian instances might be adduced.

Magical spells with accompanying manual rites were also used to enhance or diminish sexual powers and for various

⁶⁵ *Pap. Ch. Beatty IX*, verso, B. 12, 1-B. 17, 1.

⁶⁶ *Pap. Ch. Beatty IX*, verso, B. 17, 2-18, 10.

⁶⁷ *Pap. Mag. Salt* (B.M., 10051). ⁶⁸ *Pap. Mag. Salt*, Cols. 2-5.

obstetrical purposes.⁶⁹ In a collection of aphrodisiacs, designed to enhance virility, there is one bearing the strange title : " another remedy for bringing to life the body of a dead man "⁷⁰ but its method of application shows that it refers rather to impotence than to necromancy. Magico-medical means were used for contraception,⁷¹ to ascertain whether a woman be pregnant or not,⁷² and to assuage the pains of labour and facilitate birth.⁷³ For the protection of new-born babies many spells, some of them very elaborate, were used,⁷⁴ and also for ascertaining whether a baby would live or die. This might be ascertained from the infant's cry : " If he says *ny* (" yes "), he will live ; if he says *mbi* (" no "), he will die,"⁷⁵ or the prognostication might be ascertained by putting a pellet boiled in milk in the baby's mouth on the day of its birth,— " If he spits it out, he will die ; if he swallows it he will live."⁷⁶

The belief in lucky and unlucky days prevailed in ancient Egypt, and several papyri have come down to us containing calendars of the days of the year, marked " good " or " bad " as the case may be.⁷⁷ It may be mentioned that the Egyptian year consisted of twelve months of thirty days each, and in the attempt to prevent the progressive error in the seasons, five epagomenal days, " the days over the

⁶⁹ *Pap. Ch. Beatty X* and *XIII* ; *London-Leiden Mag. Pap.*, 12, 1-31 ; 15, 1-20 ; 25, 23-26, 18, etc.

⁷⁰ *Pap. Ch. Beatty X*, verso, 1, 4.

⁷¹ *Kahun Med. Pap.*, 3, 6 ; *Ramesseum Med. Pap. No. 1*, §§ 23-24.

⁷² *Berlin Med. Pap.*, verso, 1, 3-2, 5 ; *Kahun Med. Pap.*, 3, 1-25 ; *London-Leiden Mag. Pap.*, verso, 5, 4-8.

⁷³ *Pap. Leiden 348*, 12, 2-6 ; *Pap. Berlin 3027*, 5, 8-7, 2.

⁷⁴ *Pap. Berlin 3027*, *passim* ; *Ramesseum Med. Pap. No. 1*, §§ 17-18.

⁷⁵ *Pap. Ebers*, 90, 13-14 ; cf. 90, 14-15.

⁷⁶ *Ramesseum Med. Pap. No. 1*, § 19.

⁷⁷ *Pap. Sallier IV* ; *Pap. B.M. 10474*, verso ; *Pap. Kahun* (ed. Griffith, pl. 25). See *Journ. Eg. Archaeology*, xii (1926), p. 240. The *Dies Nefastae* or *Dies Aegyptiacae*, as they are often called, figure largely in mediaeval MSS. in Europe.

year," were added between the last day of the old year and the first of the new. The five days were the birthdays of the children of Nut, and they were all "bad" days, fraught with especial danger. For protection against their evil effects, a book of incantations was drawn up, a copy of which has come down to us in one of the Leiden papyri, which contains two collections of incantations.⁷⁸ It is headed "The Book for the Last Day of the Year" and contains spells appropriated to this day and to the five epagomenae that follow. It begins with addresses to twelve divinities, each of whom is called upon by name. This is followed by a long and somewhat threatening harangue addressed to them collectively in which the magician warns them off, declares them to be the makers of strife and tumult, that they have no power over him, that he, fortified with the breath of life in his nostrils and with magic as his talisman, tramples his adversaries under foot.⁷⁹ A catalogue of the days next succeeds, with their magical names, and the spells to be recited in respect of each. The days are as follows :

- Day 1. Birthday of Osiris.
- Day 2. Birthday of Horus the Elder.
- Day 3. Birthday of Seth.
- Day 4. Birthday of Isis.
- Day 5. Birthday of Nephthys.⁸⁰

The rubric directs that the incantations are to be recited over a strip of linen, upon which are drawn the figures of the twelve gods, and adds, "thou shalt do no manner of work on these evil days."⁸¹ Figures of the gods, as a model for the magician to copy on his linen strip, are set out at the end of the document.⁸² A second book follows, containing another series of magical names of the five days, with an alternative set of spells.⁸³

⁷⁸ *Pap. Leiden* 346.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1, 1-2, 5.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2, 6-3, 2.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 3, 3-4.

⁸² *Ibid.*, base of 3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 3, 4-12.

There can be no doubt that, originally at least, the magical drawings just referred to were believed to be capable of "coming to life," and the same may be said of amulets also. In the Turin spell mentioned above (p. 241), a figure of a bird is used, and it is specifically directed that the magician is to "open its mouth," i.e. perform the animation ceremony commonly called "opening the mouth," thereby converting a wooden image into a living bird. The very hieroglyphs themselves with which the texts are written, might "come to life," and move and be harmful. In the Pyramid Texts, as well as in certain other early inscriptions, many of the signs are deliberately mutilated to render them incapable of malignant activity. Human figures are deprived of their bodies and legs, and represented as heads and arms only in the case of men, and without even arms in the case of women. Snakes are shown either without heads, or as cut in half; some of the mammals also are cut in half. Birds and bees are mutilated, but curiously enough the former lose their legs and retain their wings, whilst the latter have their heads cut off but retain their stings. Finally, it may be added that crocodiles are often transfixed with knives, whilst the serpent Apopis, the great enemy of the sun-god, is regularly depicted with a knife stuck into every fold of its coils. Apopis is the subject of numerous magical spells and rites,⁸⁴ in which it was burned in effigy, figures or drawings of it being destroyed by fire in order, by the well-known principle of sympathetic magic, to destroy the monster itself.

The knowledge of magical names was an important feature in Egyptian magic. To know the magical name of a demon or any hostile power was to ensure its defeat and the victory of the exorciser. In the papyrus just quoted, the expression occurs, "he who knows the names of the

⁸⁴ Cf. especially the "Book of Overthrowing Apopis," *Pap. Bremner-Rhind*, 22, 1-32, 54.

days shall neither hunger, nor thirst, he shall not fall down before the 'plague-of-the-year,' the goddess Sekhmet shall not gain mastery over him." ⁸⁵ A similar colophon is often added to protective or prophylactic spells. The long collection of incantations contained in another Leiden papyrus ⁸⁶ ends with these words: "He who recites this book finds favour every day; he hungers not, he thirsts not; he lacks not clothing; his heart is not heavy; he enters not the place of judgment, nor does judgment go forth against him; [but] if he enters the place of judgment, he leaves it justified, adoration being paid to him like a god, nor does his reputation forsake him; weakness does not oppress him; he dies not of the 'plague-of-the-year,'" etc. ⁸⁷ Many of the spells in the Book of the Dead end with a colophon to the effect that he who knows the spell will find beatitude and prosperity. ⁸⁸

The expression "plague-of-the-year" has just been mentioned. This was some kind of pestilence or affliction which was greatly dreaded, and it is often the subject of prophylactic charms. It would appear that it was believed to be an evil wind, or some malady carried by the wind. Several of the incantations written on the back of the surgical treatise in the Edwin Smith papyrus, are charms to be used against this unknown evil. Thus the first is called "Incantation for exorcising the wind of the 'plague-of-the-year'." ⁸⁹ The second is for "exorcising the plague-bearing wind, and the demons of disease," ⁹⁰ and the third, fourth and fifth have a similar purpose. ⁹¹ The belief that disease is carried by the wind is very prevalent, and it

⁸⁵ *Pap. Leiden* 346, 2, 6-7. Cf. the long list of the names of Apopis in *Pap. Bremner-Rhind*, 32, 13-54.

⁸⁶ *Pap. Leiden* 347.

⁸⁷ *Pap. Leiden* 347, 12, 10-13, 1.

⁸⁸ *Book of the Dead*, 64, 70, 71, 72, 80, 91, 101, 125, etc.

⁸⁹ *Pap. Ed. Smith*, 18, 1-11.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18, 11-16.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 18, 7-19, 14. Cf. also *Pap. Sallier IV*, 8, 9; 15, 1. "The year of pestilence" is often mentioned in literary and historical texts.

survived until the birth of modern scientific medicine. It may have been to exclude the wind, and the dangers carried by the wind, that enchantments were laid on the windows doors and other parts of houses.⁹²

Prophylactic and defensive magic was thus used, as we have seen, against every kind of contingency and, before leaving the subject, a few more instances may be given. There were, as may well be supposed, many incantations to avert death. One of the Turin papyri contains a very interesting passage in which are enumerated seventy different kinds of death, or rather seventy different agents, animate or inanimate, that may be potential causes of death.⁹³ The text purports to be a royal order issued by Osiris; and it is, in fact, an undertaking extracted by him, through the mouth of the magician, from the various objects and entities enumerated, not to be the cause of death of the person for whose benefit the spell is recited. It is given in the tabular form so dear to Egyptian scribes, with an oft-repeated formula: "By a death owing to the head; by a death owing to the eyes; by a death owing to the belly; by a death owing to plague; by a death owing to disease," and so on, through the seventy items of the catalogue, which contains snakes, scorpions, feline animals, shipwreck, strangling, trees, herbs, bites, drowning, etc., in a most promiscuous order without any logical arrangement. This text has, to some extent, a remarkable parallel in one of the episodes in the legend of Balder the Beautiful. Amongst other spells to avert death may be mentioned one entitled "Spell for not allowing death to come to fetch a man."⁹⁴ This, as usual, was to be recited seven times over drawings of gods, and hung around the neck of the man for whose benefit the charm was made. In this connection it may be mentioned that spells and charms written on slips

⁹² *Pap. Ch. Beatty VIII*, verso, 1, 1-2, 3. ⁹³ *Pap. Turin*, 120, 8-121, 11.

⁹⁴ *Pap. Ch. Beatty XV*, 1-5.

of parchment and hung round the neck have been commonly used in this country almost to our own days. Death was believed by the Egyptians to enter by the left ear,⁹⁵ and this belief accounts for a recipe entitled "To banish death from the ear."⁹⁶ To avert all calamities, magic was reverted to: thus we have "a book for repelling fear that comes to befall a man by day or by night from before or behind,"⁹⁷ and even anger might be averted by magic.⁹⁸

The foregoing sketch, necessarily very incomplete, has, it is hoped, given some idea of the wide range of the magician's activities. In quoting these instances I have usually referred to the magician as the operator, but whilst there were undoubtedly professional magicians in Egypt,⁹⁹ there can be no doubt that most of the magical texts that have come down to us are not the private rolls secretly guarded by these professional magicians, but collections of spells for general use. It was doubtless profitable for the magician to divulge his craft to some extent. During the nineteenth century, there appeared in England books bearing such titles as *Every man his own Lawyer*, *Every man his own Doctor*, which purported to make available to the ordinary man the secrets of two of the most exclusive professions. Similarly, from what we know of the origin of many of the magical papyri that fill our museums to-day, we can be sure that most of them were written for popular edification. Most of them have been found in the tombs of private individuals who were not professional magicians, and who merely owned magical writings as part of a general library. Again, some of the magical texts are inscribed on the same roll with model letters and other schoolboys' exercises, or associated with miscellaneous

⁹⁵ *Pap. Ebers*, 100, 4.

⁹⁶ *Berlin Med. Pap.*, 6, 11.

⁹⁷ *Pap. Leiden* 348, 2, 1-7.

⁹⁸ *London-Leiden Mag. Pap.*, 15, 24-31.

⁹⁹ On this subject see the illuminating articles by A. H. Gardiner, *Proc. Soc. Biblical Archaeol.*, xxxix (1917), pp. 31-44; 139-140.

texts which have no bearing whatever on their subject-matter.¹⁰⁰ Many single spells, written on small slips of papyrus, and intended to be attached to the persons of the living or the dead, have likewise been found.¹⁰¹

There are many branches of the subject that I have been obliged to pass over altogether. Such are the elaborate magical ceremonies performed in the temples, in the embalming of the dead, and in the ceremonies commonly called "The Opening of the Mouth," the purpose of which was to reanimate the mummy by restoring to it the use of its mouth, eyes, limbs and all the functions of which it had temporarily been deprived.¹⁰² Nor have I touched upon the complex ceremonies connected with divination, because these are only known to us by demotic and Greek papyri of dates later than that of the dynastic period. In leaving the subject thus necessarily incomplete, I will refer only to one other aspect of Egyptian magic by way of concluding this sketch.

Nearly all the spells and ceremonies to which I have alluded relate to protection against calamities due to supernatural agencies or to powers beyond the control of ordinary mortals, but there still remains to be considered the question of "black magic," or evil deliberately worked by one man against another. When magic was used directly by man against man, it immediately came within legal cognizance, and it is by reason of the survival of certain fragmentary legal papyri¹⁰³ that we are made aware of this fact. During the reign of Rameses III, a conspiracy was discovered and

¹⁰⁰ Examples: *Pap. Leiden* 348; *Pap. Ch. Beatty* V, XI, XVI, XVIII.

¹⁰¹ Examples: *Pap. Leiden* 353-359.

¹⁰² These elaborate ceremonies, of which many pictorial representations have come down to us, admirably illustrate the manual rites performed by the priests, whilst the accompanying texts supply us with the oral rites related to each ceremony.

¹⁰³ *Pap. Lee*; *Pap. Rollin*; *Pap. Judiciaire de Turin*.

the malefactors brought to trial. What the exact nature of their intentions was, we do not know, but a number of prisoners suffered the death penalty for direct action or complicity in the use of magical writings and wax figures of gods and men the purpose of which was to bewitch and enfeeble their victims. Black magic was the antithesis of magic applied to beneficent purposes: for the latter physical and ceremonial purity was indispensable.

One final point concerning the legal aspect of the magician may be mentioned. The services of magic were called in at times to identify suspected persons or to give oracular responses to questions. In such cases it was usual for a professional magician to read out a list of names before the cult-image of a god—usually the deified King Amenophis I.¹⁰⁴ When the name of the guilty party was reached, the god nodded. This was probably achieved by a priest secretly pulling a string, just as in mediæval England the Boxley Crucifix nodded its head and rolled its eyes when the concealed monks manipulated the strings. In the same way, when an oracular response was wanted, questions were put to the image, which signified assent by nodding.

And lastly, we may fairly ask: did the Egyptians really believe in the efficacy of their magic? We can never truly know, but from their own written records—in texts, hieroglyphic, hieratic, demotic and coptic, covering a continuous period of more than four thousand years—the Egyptians themselves affirm that they believed, or feigned to believe, in magic, and the difference between real belief and feigned belief is a fundamental factor in human psychology, and it has profoundly affected the behaviour of man throughout his age-long history.

¹⁰⁴ There are many texts recording this method of procedure; e.g. *Pap. Brit. Mus.*, 10335; 10417; *B.M. Ostraca*, 5624, 5637; *Gardiner Ostracon*, 4; *Turin Pap. Lieblein*, 5, 1; *Turin Love-Songs*, verso, 1, 14; *Pap. Berlin*, 10496, etc.